



Study pack on SCI for workcamps

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Introduction

This study pack shall help camp co-ordinators to organise a study part on SCI for workcamp participants. The study pack is designed, so that it can be used for different purposes adapted to the volunteers : presentations, discussion, working in groups and self study.

Aim of the study pack

The idea is, that the campleader organise e.g. a evening on SCI during the workcamp in order to speak up to 2 hours. The study pack shall be help to organise it.

The volunteers shall understand, that SCI has long tradition of organising workcamps and other activities. The sense and use of workcamps and international volunteering shall be analysed and a discussion on the idea of SCI shall be started.

The approach of this study pack bases mainly on the history of SCI and refers therefore often to workcamps or activities in the past. On one hand the basic ideas of SCI will be explained. On the other hand workcamp participants are asked to compare the situation of the past with the workcamp and its activities today. At the same time the pack shows the wide field of SCI activities.

This study pack doesn't go deeply to specific special subjects of SCI activities like long term volunteering, North-South exchange etc. Therefore it's recommended present other documents from SCI branches like the latest newsletter or leaflets.

With this study pack I hope that workcamps participants understand the methods and aims of SCI better.

The study packs is divided in different modules with a short introduction to the subject. For each subjects a photos and documents added in order to make presentations, work in groups or for self study.

To each subject there exercises proposed to do which are divided in three levels:

★ *easy* : Simple presentations with pictures, easy questions to participants.

★★ *medium* : Presentations of subjects, interaction with participants.

★★★ *difficult* : Study of documents, discussion in plenary, self reflection.

Content of study pack

- **Introduction :**

Comments on the purpose of the study pack. General recommendation about how to use the study pack.

- **Module A: SCI in the 20th century**

Survey on the development of SCI movement to a world-wide peace organisation. See and understand, that SCI organises workcamps for a long time.

- **Module B: Workcamps in the past and today**

Learn about the differences in workcamp life. Compare with it the situation today.

- **Module C: First workcamp of SCI : Verdun 1920**

Understand the backgrounds of the first SCI workcamp. Discuss about promotion of peace and reconciliation in SCI nowadays.

- **Module D: Pick and broken sword – the SCI logo**

Discuss the aims of SCI and compare it to other peace organisations. Speak about alternative service for conscientious objectors.



A survey on the development of SCI movement to a world-wide peace organisation.

First generation (1920 – 1944)

The first workcamps were organised by Pierre Ceresole, a Swiss radical pacifist, as alternative to military service. Later in the 30s several SCI initiatives in several countries (mainly Switzerland, France, Great Britain) started independently to organise workcamps. They formed a loose federation of SCI branches.

- 1920 First workcamp in the war damaged village Esnes (Verdun, France). Reconstruction service after World War I (1914-1918) in to create **reconciliation**.
- 1924 Second international workcamp in Vers l'Eglise (Switzerland). Model service for **alternative service** for conscientious objectors.
- 1934 - 1936 Thanks to the contacts to Gandhi movement a relief service after the earth quake in Bihar 1934 (India) was organised. This contacts and **North/South activities** were continued in the 50s.
- 1937 - 1939 **Humanitarian help** during Spanish Civil War for refugees. Evacuation and food distribution for refugees. It was the beginning of social work in SCI.

Second Generation (1945 – 1968)

International association of SCI branches with centralised structure was founded in 1948 by several European SCI branches and groups. The volunteer exchange and workcamp organisation were improved (e.g. set up of SCI volunteer insurance). In this period SCI movement set focus on help and development work. The number of workcamps and volunteers increased tremendously : 1947: 46 workcamps in 9 countries, 1968 : 298 workcamps in 24 countries.

- 1945 - 1948 Humanitarian help and reconstruction service after WWII in France, Germany, Italy, Czechoslovakia and Greece. First **international committee meeting** of SCI in Paris.
- 1950 Construction of houses for refugees in Faridabad (India). SCI is probably the first non-religious NGO active in **development co-operation**. As consequence several local branches and groups of SCI were founded in Asia (India 1956, Pakistan 1951, Sri Lanka 1959 ...).
- 1955 SCI volunteers take part in a workcamp during World Youth Festival in Warsaw. SCI is probably the first non-communist organisation, which established volunteer exchange between **East and West** during the cold war.
- 1962 - 1967 Set up of medical care and schools in the province Tlemcen (West Algeria) after civil war. Largest **development** project ever organised by SCI.

Third Generation (since 1969)

The international SCI co-ordination was decentralised to regional co-ordination and

subject orientated international working groups were established. In the beginning of the 70s the activities and the political implication of SCI in society were reviewed. As consequence SCI set more focus on social and political awareness rising in workcamps. Again the volunteer exchange increased.

- 1969 SCI Seminar in Uddel (Netherlands) on the political implication of voluntary service. Begin of various SCI initiatives for **social and political awareness rising**.
- 1972 Set up of SCI **East West** commission in order to facilitate volunteer exchange and to improve co-operation with partner organisations in socialist countries.
- 1987 An SCI commission of **Solidarity, Exchange and Education of Development** is established. Since the beginning of 80s various SCI branches organised solidarity projects on North/South topics while the volunteer exchanged increased.
- 1991 Begin of first SCI groups in former socialist countries in Eastern Europe (e.g. Poland, Hungary, Slovenia, Romania).

In acknowledgement of its efforts to promote peace and understanding, SCI was awarded in 1987 the title of Messenger of Peace given by the United Nations (UNO). There are now SCI branches and groups in more than 30 countries, which organise over 600 workcamps every year.

Photos

1. Esnes, Verdun (France 1920)	7. Warsaw (Poland 1955)
2. Les Ormonts (Switzerland 1924)	8. Sebdoou (Tlemcen, West Algeria 1964)
3. Bihar (India 1935)	9. Easter March, Basel (Switzerland 1973)
4. Refugee transport Madrid – Valencia (Spain 1937)	10. Study tour SCI (Bulgaria 1984)
5. Cover of workcamp booklet (Great Britain 1946)	11. Solidarity Campaign with Namibia (Germany 1986)
6. Faridabad (India 1950)	12. Workcamp evaluation seminar, Bucharest (Romania 1992)

Documents

- A) Biography of Pierre Ceresole
- B) P. Ceresole : Vision of SCI (Article of Etienne Reclus)

Exercises

- a) ★★ Make a presentations of the of the photos in chronicle order. Prepare short comments for each photo with help of the given explanation.
- b) ★ Put the photo No.1-21 on the table. Ask the volunteers to study the the photos :
 - Find the founder of SCI Pierre Ceresole with help of picture on document A. (He is on No.1, 2, 3)
 - What are the women doing ? What are the men doing?
- c) ★★★ When Ceresole initiated the SCI movement he had specific vision in mind : The abolition of army :
 - Read the document A in small group: Explain in the plenary why P. Ceresole is called a radical pacifist?
 - Read the document B in small group: Summarise the vision of SCI on a poster and present in the plenary.



Module B : Workcamp life in the past and today

Workcamp doesn't consist only of work. Volunteers come from far away together in order to live together too. The founders of SCI considered this living community as promotion for international understanding. However in the past workcamp life was little bit different.

- Work** The volunteers worked for 8-9 hours per day. The work was usually hard manual work, so that "Pick and Shovel" became a synonym of workcamps.
- Leadership** A authoritarian camp leader maintained strong discipline in workcamps. Actually a organisation similar to the army was applied. For the SCI founder, Pierre Ceresole, a workcamp was a model for a alternative service for conscientious objectors. Therefore in workcamps the same discipline like in the army should rule.
- Gender role** The first workcamps had a traditional split in gender role. Men worked with pick and shovel, while women were occupied in the kitchen. The women (called 'Sisters'), did the cooking, cleaning and washing while the men (called 'Friends'), were working doing the 'hard' work.
- Living together** From the beginning SCI considered itself as non religious movement. But some rituals of the Quakers¹ were introduced like the minute's silence, which was hold before the meals in order to respect all the believe of every participant. An important habit was to sing the 'Amitiés'² for the volunteer farewell.

Photos

13) Work : Feldis (Switzerland 1929)	18) Accommodation : Budapest (Hungary 1999)
14) Work : Valeco (France 1991)	19) Leisure time : Raon L'Etape (France 1946)
15) Food : Mont Bailly (Switzerland 1935)	20) Leisure time : Palanga (Lithuania 1996)
16) Food : La Chaux-de-Fonds (Switzerland 1998)	21) Amitié song : Kfar Vitkin (Israel 1951)
17) Accommodation : Oakengates (Great Britain 1933)	

Documents

- C) Amitiés – Song of SCI
D) Self Governance in workcamps – a letter from a volunteer

Exercises

- a) ★ Put the photo No.13-21 on a table. The workcamp participants shall guess from which year the photos are.

1 Quakers, noun of the Religious Society of Friends is a Christian movement devoted to peaceful principles founded in 1650 in England. They rejects outward rites and an ordained ministry and have a long tradition of actively working for peace and opposing war.

2 *Amitiés* is French and means friendship

- b) ☆ Make a presentations of the of the photos. Prepare short comments for each photo with help of the given explanation. Ask the participants to compare the situation in the past in workcamps with today (work, leisure time, leadership,...)
- c) ☆☆ Instead of a strong leadership more self governance of the group is postulated in SCI since the 70s. Nevertheless there's often a volunteer taking care of the group. What is the role of the 'leader' and the group in your workcamp?
- Read document D in a small group and discuss the problems of self governance in workcamps. Make proposals to improve it.
 - Discuss the role of workcamp coordinator in your camp. Is it possible to run a workcamp without coordinator?
- d) ☆☆ The SCI song 'Amitiés' was sung in a circle. The volunteers crossed their arms and gave the hands the each other (see photo No.21).
- Read the text of the song. What do you think about it?
 - What common rituals do you have in your camp (Songs, games, camp diary, ...). Are they important in order to form a group?
 - Maybe somebody of the workcamp can teach to sing the "Amitiés"



In August 1920, an international peace congress was organised in Bilthoven (Netherlands). Pacifists discussed, what could be done for peace after the World War. One of the ideas discussed at the conference came from Swiss engineer Pierre Ceresole. He wanted to form an international group of volunteers who would do practical reconstruction work, working and living together in a spirit of peace and friendship.

As consequence he went to Eastern France in order to find out what work could be done and how. He decided to start their reconstruction work in Esnes, near Verdun where 1916 one of the most devastating battle of World War I took place.

The village was almost completely destroyed and there were abandoned war machines and unexploded shells and mines everywhere.

Ten volunteers took part in the Esnes-project. The volunteers build temporary homes for the villagers and cleared the farm land so that it could be used again. The fact, that three of them were German, was seen as crucial and symbolic by the group; a step towards reconciliation between France and Germany.

Quite a lot work was done for the reconstruction of the village and the former villagers came back to Esnes. But the project had to be stopped after five month as consequence of the still difficult relation between France and Germany.

Although the project didn't got that publicity, Ceresole and his friends gained valuable experience to organise workcamps.

Photos

- 1) Esnes (Verdun, France, 1920)

Documents

- E) Reconciliation in workcamp projects in former Yugoslavia

Exercises

- ☆☆☆ After the first world war a strong peace movement started in Europe. The slogan common slogan was "No more war". The first SCI service was also reaction on that war and aimed to be symbolic action. In order to understand the symbol of Esnes, ask the participants, what they know about first world war:
 - When did it start, which countries were involved
 - What were the specific problems of the war (gas war, war in trenches, long battles ..)
 - What were the political consequences afterwards (e.g. Russian Revolution, Hitler came to power)
 - Guess why this attempt of a symbolic reconciliation wasn't successful.Make notes on a poster for further discussions. Add comments if necessary (continue with proposal b)
- ☆☆ Show photo No.1 and explain, what was done in Esnes. .
- ☆☆☆☆ Ceresole had the idea, that workcamps contribute to international understanding, so that volunteers would refuse to be made each other's enemies. Read document E about reconciliation projects in former Yugoslavia in a small group :
 - What do you think about this approach to create reconciliation and peace in a conflict region?
 - What creates peace after a violent conflict?



Module D: Pick and broken sword – the SCI logo

There are always confusions about the logo of SCI. Often people recognise a cross and think of SCI as organisation with Christian background. Actually it has another symbolic : A broken sword behind a shovel with the letter word “PAX”, which means ‘peace’ in latin.

The logo was introduced as badge for the volunteers, who did finish a workcamp. The symbolic refers to another famous logo which became symbol of the peace movement after the first world war : a broken rifle

This logo is still used by the ‘ War Resisters International’, who promote non-violent action against the causes of war and support people who refuse to bear arms (<http://www.wri-irg.org/>). SCI and WRI were founded in the 20s of the last century as reaction to the cruelty and senselessness of war. Both organisation oppose to military service. While SCI promotes alternative service for conscientious objectors, WRI is against all form obligatory services.

Also the approach of SCI to peace is different to WRI. It's more practical and less political: Workcamps! The old SCI slogan which proclaimed by the founder generation SCI is typical for this non-political approach of SCI :

Deeds not words

However the aims and activities of SCI has often political implications (e.g. Alternative service, social justice, non violence, solidarity). SCI today promotes therefore, that volunteers learn and talk about politics in workcamps for their awareness rising. Each workcamp should have a study part about subjects which usually refer to the project partner of the workcamp.

Photos

13) Work : Feldis (Switzerland 1929)

22) SCI logo

Documents

F) Excerpt from International Constitution of SCI

G) War Resister's International - a nonviolent movement to end war

Proposals

- a) ★ Show and explain the logo SCI and explain the different peace approach between SCI and War Resisters International (Photo No.22).
 - Ask the volunteers if they like the logo.
 - Ask the volunteers to draw a new logo for SCI. Propose to use symbols like peace, volunteering & internationalism
- b) ★★★ Read document F and G in a small groups and compare the peace approach of SCI and WRI :
 - Make a simple list of the differences between SCI and WRI on Alternative Service and conscientious objection, on non-violence, on volunteering and methodical approach.
 - Ask the volunteers about the situation of conscientious objectors in their home country. Is refusing to bear arms a human right?
 - Discuss what is the political implication of your workcamp (study part)?